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Processes of Spatialization
under the Global Condition

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"New Regionalisms" and Violent Conflicts in Africa: The Politics of the AU and ECOWAS in Mali and Guinea-Bissau

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Introduction

In recent times, West Africa has (once again) gained international attention as a region hit by various crises. Islamic extremism; transnational drug economies; the smuggling of people, cars, arms, et cetera; as well as transnational interventions have come to most visibly represent particular contemporary globalization processes in West Africa. Paired with already widespread cleavages due to socioeconomic hardship affecting vast percentages of the West African population, these dynamics point to the (violent) reordering of space, described as de- and re-territorialization,[1] and are based on different — often conflicting — ways of (re-)imagining space in Africa.[2] Moreover, the implications of these dynamics appear to reach far beyond the confines of West Africa — as most dramatically evidenced in debates on the current European "refugee crisis"[3] and the fear of terrorist attacks in Europe.[4] Hence, Western powers have come to consider the perceived destabilization of the region and in particular the seeming proliferation of "weak" or "failed states" as a threat to the territorial organization of the international state system and, as such, have intervened in various ways in order to counter the trend.[5]

In this environment, regional organizations (ROs) have become key actors. Due to the transnational character of some of the problems at hand, states have sought to (re)gain control and sovereignty through cooperation at different levels, most importantly through regional projects. In West Africa, two organizations in particular — the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — have come to play a central role in (inter)national efforts to deal with different challenges to peace and security. While we focus on their role as ROs in the following, we conceptualize the AU and ECOWAS in a way that sensitizes us to different dimensions involved in their political actions towards violent conflicts in Africa, such as processes of regionalization (societal interactions), the building of regional awareness and identity (cognitive regionalism), practical regional interstate cooperation, and the development of regional actorness.[6] These different dimensions may play together differently and to varying degrees over time and space. Therefore, we understand the AU and ECOWAS simultaneously as ROs and "New Regionalisms" (NRs) pointing to the wider processes of regionalism and regionalization that are related to these ROs. The politics of the AU and ECOWAS in 2012 towards the conflicts in Mali and Guinea-Bissau illustrate the central role that ROs and NRs have assumed in matters of peace and security.

In Mali, the AU and ECOWAS had to react to a so-called Tuareg rebellion that had pushed the Malian army to its limits and caused low- and mid-level officers to protest and eventually stage a coup against the government on 21 March. In the course of events, a temporary alliance between Tuareg fighters and Al-Qaeda-linked armed groups formed and seized the northern part of the country. Eventually, on 6 April, a group of Tuareg proclaimed the independent territory of Azawad. In Guinea-Bissau, the two ROs were confronted with a coup d'état when in April 2012 a self-proclaimed "military command" disposed of the constitutional government, interrupting the ongoing presidential elections. After the coup, a stark increase in drug traffick-

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1 A. Appadurai, "Sovereignty without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography", in: S.M. Low and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 337–349; N. Brenner, "Beyond state-centrism?: Space, territoriality, and geographical scale in globalization studies", *Theory and Society* 28 (1999) 1, pp. 39–78.

2 See A. Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa", *Public Culture* 12 (2000) 1, pp. 259–284.

3 See Deutsche Welle, "Von der Leyen: Bundeswehr bekämpft in Mali Fluchtursachen", 4 April 2016, www.dw.com / de / von-der-leyen-bundeswehr-bek%C3%A4mpft-in-mali-fluchtursachen / a-19163505 (accessed 16 Dec 2016).

4 K.L. Assoua, "Mali ist ein globales Problem: Die regionalen Kräfte reichen nicht aus, um die Terroristen zu bekämpfen", *Internationale Politik* (2013) 2, pp. 72–75.

5 L. Figueroa Helland and S. Borg, "The Lure of State Failure", *Interventions* 16 (2014) 6, pp. 877–897; N. Koenig, *EU Security Policy and Crisis Management: A Quest for Coherence*, London: Routledge, 2016 ; K. Légaré, "Le narratif sécuritaire des états défaillants: Contestation rivale des termes de la souveraineté?", *Aspects* 2 (2008), pp. 143–162. The perception of West Africa as falling apart and turning into a threat for international security at large is not a new one. Already in 1994, Robert Kaplan drew on observations from West Africa to warn of what he called "The Coming Anarchy" (R.D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet", *The Atlantic*, February 1994, www.theatlantic.com / magazine / archive / 1994 / 02 / the-coming-anarchy / 304670 / [accessed 20 Dec 2016]).

6 B. Hettne and F. Söderbaum, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness", *New Political Economy* 5 (2000) 3, pp. 457–472; A. Hurrell, "One world? Many worlds?: The place of regions in the study of international society", *International Affairs* 83 (2007) 1, pp. 127–146.

ing (linking Latin America to Europe through Guinea-Bissau) was reported; the coup leaders have been suspected of involvement in these activities. Both conflicts are connected, on the one hand, through the (more or less explicit) discursive framing of "narco-terrorism"[7] that posits a link between the drug trade and Islamic terrorism, with the former financing the latter (e.g. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in West Africa).[8] On the other hand, the reactions of the AU and ECOWAS towards these two member states have been interlinked and have mutually influenced one another.

Although rarely explicit, what is striking in the debates about Mali and Guinea-Bissau is the central role of (Western) ideas of "statehood" and a traditional notion of "sovereignty". The activities of Islamic extremists or international drug cartels – both working through informal, transnational networks – are portrayed as undermining "state sovereignty", that is, complete and undivided political authority and territorial control.[9] As will become clear in this paper, such accounts have little empirical substance. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that the relationship of cause and consequence is actually the other way around. In these cases, different (informal) networks developed because of the particular spatial constellation of sovereignty and the state.[10] This evidence points to the impact that a particular dominant ideal of organizing space has on the way conflicts are framed, making certain reactions more likely than others. In the case of the AU and ECOWAS, this is evident in their stated core principles, which emphasize territorial integrity as well as in their policies, for example, regarding unconstitutional changes of government. Therefore, paying analytical attention to space enables us, firstly, to see how conflict in Africa is related to the (violent) (re-)ordering of space; secondly, to see different spatialities as coexisting and mutually constitutive; and lastly, to better understand the reactions of the AU and ECOWAS as based on their particular conceptions of space and, at the same time shaping processes of spatialization in West Africa.[11]

Taking the events of early 2012 in Mali and Guinea-Bissau as the starting point, this paper examines the involvement of the AU and ECOWAS in these conflicts and subsequently explores the spatial dimensions of their responses. To this end, our analysis is guided by the following empirical questions: What strategies do West African states, the AU, and ECOWAS pursue in their attempts to (re)gain sovereignty as well as to defend or recover a particular spatial order (i. e. a specific order of states)? How do these actors cooperate with bilateral and multilateral actors to that end? Which (possibly novel or innovative) processes and practices of spatialization go along with all of this? The paper begins with an overview of the literature on discussing the roles of ROs and NRs in peace and security. As demonstrated in this paper, space as an analytical category is missing in much of the literature. Subsequently, the paper engages with the conflict situations in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, followed by a first attempt to explore the spatial dimensions of the engagement of the AU

7 PSC, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commisssion on Terrorism in Africa and the AU's Efforts to Address this Scourge (PSC / PR(CCCIII))", Addis Ababa, 8 December 2011; PSC, "The African Union Strategy for the Sahel Region (PSC / PR / 3 [CDXLIX])" Addis Ababa, 11 August 2014; G. Thompson, "The Narco-terror Trap", *Propublica*, 7 December 2015, www.propublica.org / article / the-dea-narco-terror-trap (accessed 31 Jan 2016).

8 H. Lulie, "The threat of the 'unholy trinity'", *Issafrica*, 18 March 2013, www.issafrica.org / iss-today / the-threat-of-the-unholy-trinity (accessed 31 Jan 2016); W.K. Rashbaum, "U.S. Charges 3 Malians in Drug Plot", *The New York Times*, 18 December 2009, www.nytimes.com / 2009 / 12 / 19 / world / africa / 19narco.html?_r=0 (accessed 31 Jan 2016).

9 E. Cody, "In Mali, an Islamist extremist haven takes shape", *The Washington Post*, 7 June 2012, www.washingtonpost.com / world / africa / in-mali-an-islamic-extremist-haven-takes-shape / 2012 / 06 / 06 / gJQAIKNlKV_story.html (accessed 16 Dec 2016); T. Lister, "Disaster looms for people of Mali as country is split by revolt", *CNN*, 13 April 2012, http://edition.cnn.com / 2012 / 04 / 12 / world / africa / mali-revolt / (accessed 16 Dec 2016); A. Loewenstein, "How Not to Fix an African Narco-State: Europe is trying to stop Guinea-Bissau's drug trade by throwing money at the traffickers", *Foreign Policy*, 6 January 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com / 2016 / 01 / 06 / how-not-to-deal-with-an-african-narco-state-guinea-bissau / (accessed 28 Jan 2016); UNODC, "Cocaine trafficking in West Africa: The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau)", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna, December 2007; E. Vulliamy, "How a tiny West African country became the world's first narco state", *The Guardian*, 9 March 2008, www.theguardian.com / world / 2008 / mar / 09 / drugstrade (accessed 28 Jan 2016).

10 M. Bøås, "Crime, Coping, and Resistance in the Mali-Sahel Periphery", *African Security* 8 (2015) 4, pp. 299–319; H. Vigh, "Critical states and cocaine connections", in: M. Utas (ed.), *African conflicts and informal power: Big men and networks*, London: Zed Books, 2012, pp. 137–157.

11 In this regard, it seems helpful to start from a minimal definition of the "state" as the minimal institutional requirement, necessary for recognition as such by and interaction with the international community. This definition focuses above all on external sovereignty, which should nevertheless be considered as empirical since it provides access to and power over certain (material and symbolic) resources, considered to be legitimate by the international system of states (at least officially). The respective constellation of related (and interlinked) internal political authority and its particular spatial configuration are then subject to the analysis in these cases. While, in our analysis, states are our primary focus, it is important not to see them as monolithic, homogenous, and static. Nor are they the only actor (but one among many and its importance in relation to others may vary see U. Engel and G.R. Olsen, "Authority, sovereignty, and Africa's changing regimes of territorialisation", Working Paper of the Graduate Centre Humanities and Social Sciences of the Research Academy Leipzig [2010]).

and ECOWAS in the respective conflicts. Finally, drawing some tentative conclusions the paper argues that an explicitly spatial perspective allows for gaining new insights into current transnational conflicts involving state and non-state actors and a better understanding of the ways in which the AU and ECOWAS react to them. However, the considerations advanced here are still of a preliminary character and need to be developed further in the course of this research project.

Literature: the conflicts in Mali and Guinea-Bissau and "New Regionalisms"

Before looking in more detail at the situations in 2012 in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, we start with a brief overview of the existing literature touching upon the reactions of the AU and ECOWAS as well as debates on the role of ROs and NRs with regard to matters of peace and security.

Concerning both Mali and Guinea-Bissau there is a substantial amount of literature dealing with the historical, socioeconomic, and political background of (violent) conflicts in these countries from various angles.[12] The interventions in 2012 by the AU and ECOWAS in Mali have been the subject of several publications by think tanks and have been taken up in academic discussions to some extent.[13] The reactions of the two ROs to the situation in Guinea-Bissau in 2012 have received far less attention (notable exceptions include two brief policy-oriented analyses[14]).[15]

12 Among the many works covering these issues, the following stand as examples: For Mali, M. Bøås and L.E. Torheim, "The Trouble in Mali—corruption, collusion, resistance", *Third World Quarterly* 34 (2013) 7, pp. 1279–1292; M.-A. Boisvert, "Failing at Violence: The Longer-lasting Impact of Pro-government Militias in Northern Mali since 2012", *African Security* 8 (2015) 4, pp. 272–298; B. Lecocq et al., "One hippopotamus and eight blind analysts: A multivocal analysis of the 2012 political crisis in the divided Republic of Mali", *Review of African Political Economy* 40 (2013) 137, pp. 343–357; Y. Ronen, "Libya, the Tuareg and Mali on the eve of the 'Arab Spring' and in its aftermath: An anatomy of changed relations", *The Journal of North African Studies* 18 (2013) 4, pp. 544–559. For Guinea-Bissau R. van der Drift, "Democracy: Legitimate Warfare in Guinea-Bissau", *Lusotopie* (1999), pp. 225–40; L. Rudebeck, *On Democracy's Sustainability: Transition in Guinea-Bissau*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2001; G. Zeverino, *O conflito político-militar na Guiné-Bissau (1998-1999): Dissertação de mestrado em gestão do desenvolvimento e cooperação internacional*. Lisboa: Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (IPAD), Centro de Documentação e Informação, 2005; and G.O. Yabi, "The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict: The Cases of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau", Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Abuja, 2010.

13 For the think tanks, E.K. Aning and A.S. Bah, "ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa: Confronting the Triple Threats", Center on International Cooperation, New York, September 2009; E.K. Aning and J. Pokoo, "Understanding the nature and threats of drug trafficking to national and regional security in West Africa", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 3 (2014) 1, pp. 1–13; C. Barrios and T. Koepf, "Re-mapping the Sahel. Transnational security challenges and international responses", Report for the EU Institute for Security Studies (19), Paris, 2014; G. d. Carvalho and L. Kumalo, *Building the capacity of the Malian police: Why MINUSMA needs to think outside the box*, Policy Brief 69, Institute for Security Studies, October 2014; M.M. Cyrill, "Conflict in Mali and French Intervention", *IDSA*, 8 December 2013, www.idsa.in / idsacomments / ConflictinMaliandFrenchIntervention_mmcyrill_080213 (accessed 31 Jan 2016); P. Pryce, "Managing the Malian Conflict: NATO's Potential Role", *Liia*, 15 September 2012, http://liia.lv / en / blogs / managing-the-malian-conflict-natos-potential-role / (accessed 31 Jan 2016). For the academic discussion, E.K. Aning and F. Edu-Afful, "African Agency in R2P: Interventions by African Union and ECOWAS in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire", *International Studies Review* 18 (2016) 1, pp. 120–133; L.-A. Théroux-Bénoni, "The long path to MINUSMA: Assessing the international response to the crisis in Mali", in: T. Tardy and M. Wyss (eds.), *Peacekeeping in Africa: The evolving security architecture*, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 171–189 ; T.G. Weiss and M. Welz, "The UN and the African Union in Mali and beyond: A shotgun wedding?", *International Affairs* 90 (2014) 4, pp. 889–905; P.D. Williams and A. Boutellis, "Partnership peacekeeping: Challenges and opportunities in the United Nations-African Union Relationship", *African Affairs* 113 (2014) 451, pp. 254–278.

14 see F.K. Aubyn, "Managing Complex Political Dilemmas in West Africa: Ecowas and the 2012 Crisis in Guinea-Bissau", *Conflict Trends* 13 (2013) 4, pp. 26–32; C. Kohl, *Irrwege und Auswege: Guinea-Bissau nach dem Putsch im April 2012*, Frankfurt am Main: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, 2013.

15 Much more attention has been paid to the interventions, especially by ECOWAS, in the 1998 / 99 civil war in Guinea-Bissau (e.g. A. Adebajo, *Building peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002; J.M. Kabia, *Humanitarian intervention and conflict resolution in West Africa: From ECOMOG to ECOMIL*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2009; C.I. Obi, "Economic Community of West African States on the Ground: Comparing Peacekeeping in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Côte D'Ivoire", *African Security* 2 (2009) 2, pp. 119–35). In addition, there are two publications covering the interventions by ECOWAS between 2003–2005 and 2009 (C. Hartmann, "Governance Transfer by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): A B2 Case Study Report", Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700, Berlin, 2013; G.O. Yabi, "The Role of

What is missing in the literature, both with respect to Mali and Guinea-Bissau, is a theory-guided analysis of the spatial dimensions of the conflicts, the reactions by the AU and ECOWAS towards them, as well as their impact on processes of spatialization (i.e. the reordering of social space) in West Africa.

On a more general level, there have been several attempts to capture the AU and ECOWAS theoretically as actors dealing with matters of peace and security. These are summarized briefly in the following paragraphs.

For almost two decades, the "region" has been firmly established as an important dimension in the analysis of post-Cold War security matters. The "regional security complex"[16] has become a term for understanding violent conflicts in the context of regional international security concerns.[17] At the same time, ROs have increasingly been expected to deal with challenges to peace and security and subsequently have been studied in this regard. The AU and African subregional organizations like ECOWAS or the Southern African Development Community have been described as regional "security mechanisms",[18] "collective security systems",[19] "peace and security systems".[20] or "multilayered security communities"[21].[22] Furthermore, ECOWAS and the AU specifically have been examined as part of a "security culture".[23]

In much of this literature, the aim to capture and understand African regional organizations results in a debate about "what they are" (e.g. a security-system, -community, -mechanism), rather than asking what they do.[24] Some of the presuppositions in this strand of literature can be traced back to institutionalist approaches in international relations (IR); reveal a certain degree of state-centrism; and are biased towards organizations that overlap with geographical regions. Space as an analytical category is almost entirely neglected.

Scholars in the IR (sub)field of NRs have been more sensitive to both (some of) the shortcomings of earlier IR approaches to regional cooperation or integration as well as to different spatial expressions of regional initiatives. Explicitly extending analysis to non-state actors, informal dynamics, and (different kinds of) regional projects outside Europe, NR approaches have come to study "new" (i.e. until then neglected) spatial configurations (e.g. zones, rims, and corridors[25]).[26] Moreover, regionalisms (and less directed, less conscious,

ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict: The Cases of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau", Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Abuja, 2010).

16 B. Buzan, "People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era", European Consortium for Political Research, Colchester, 2007.

17 In slightly different perspectives, these immediate (inter-)national entanglements have also been described as part of "regional orders" (D.A. Lake and P.M. Morgan (eds.), *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) or "regional peace and security clusters" (R. Tavares, "Understanding regional peace and security: A framework for analysis", *Contemporary Politics* 14 (2008) 2, pp. 107–127).

18 A. Adebajo, "Introduction", in: A. Adebajo and I.O.D. Rashid (eds.), *West Africa's security challenges: Building peace in a troubled region*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004, pp. 1–20.

19 A. Abass, *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security: Beyond Chapter VIII of the UN Charter*, Oxford: Hart Pub., 2004.

20 D.J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2006.

21 B. Franke, "Africa's Evolving Security Architecture and the Concept of Multilayered Security Communities", *Cooperation and Conflict* 43 (2008), pp. 313–340.

22 These concepts owe much of their understanding of regional security integration to the research and theory-building of Karl W. Deutsch, who led a historical study on European and North Atlantic regional cooperation from which he developed the concept of "security communities" to refer to collectives that had successfully pacified their domestic politics and further aimed to establish stability in their external relations (E. Adler and M. Barnett (eds.), *Security communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000; K.W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). Laurie Nathan has critiqued the use of this concept in the African context, arguing that organizations like Southern African Development Community rather resemble "communities of insecurity" (L. Nathan, *Community of Insecurity: SADC's Struggle for Peace and Security in Southern Africa*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

23 D. Sicurelli, "The Security Culture of the African Union: Adapting and Reacting to External Models", in: U. Lorenz-Carl and M. Rempe (eds.), *Mapping Agency: Comparing Regionalisms in Africa*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, pp. 17–34; P.D. Williams and J. Haacke, "Security culture, transnational challenges and the Economic Community of West African States", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 26 (2008) 2, pp. 119–136; P.D. Williams, "The security culture of the African Union", in: S. Aris and A. Wenger (eds.), *Regional organisations and security: conceptions and practices,* Abingdon: Routledge, 2014, pp. 21–40.

24 Cf. S. Aris and A. Wenger (eds.), *Regional organisations and security: conceptions and practices*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2014; U. Engel, "The Changing Role of the AU Commission in Inter-African Relations: The Case of APSA and AGA", in: J.W. Harbeson and D. Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Engaging a Changing Global Order*, New York: Westview Press, 2013, pp. 186–206; T.K. Tieku, "The Evolution of the African Union Commission and Africrats: Drivers of African Regionalisms", in: T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 193–212.

25 T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*: Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

26 M. Bøås, M.H. Marchand and T.M. Shaw, "The weave-world: The regional interweaving of economies, ideas and identities", in: F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *Theories of new regionalism: A Palgrave reader*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003,

processes of regionalization) have been conceptualized as direct (or indirect) reactions to and strategies of dealing creatively with contemporary globalization processes; Hettne has called this conceptualization "the return of the political".[27] Thus, NRs have been a theoretical and analytical tool employed by academics as well as a strategy of different actors to confront different challenges. Regionalisms have been studied as part of (world) ordering processes and elements of global governance.[28] At the same time, NR contributions have pointed to the multiplicity of different regional projects that frequently overlap and in some cases seemingly contradict each other.[29] The concept of "security regionalism" combines the concerns of NR theories with concepts of security studies, notably the "security complex" and "regional orders".[30] Both the AU and ECOWAS have been studied from an NR perspective more generally[31] and as security regionalisms in particular.[32]

However, beyond references to the regionalization of conflicts and the resulting need to find regional solutions, most of these contributions only actually reflect on the spatial dimensions involved to a very limited extent, especially when concerned with interventions of the AU and ECOWAS in West Africa.[33] The analytical part of this paper demonstrates how a spatial perspective could potentially lead to a better understanding of the engagement of ROs in violent conflicts.

This paper develops a perspective that rests on the assumption that space is a central dimension of social (inter)action. To capture the creation and change of social spaces as well as to describe the (re-)making of different kinds of spaces it adopts the concept of spatialization, referring to both the process and the outcome of spatializing actions.[34] In order to understand the variety of possible outcomes of processes of

pp. 197–210. For a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of NR debates and theories see F. Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, London: Palgrave, 2016. Key publications in the field, among many others, include M. Bøås, M.H. Marchand and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *The political economy of regions and regionalisms*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; S. Breslin et al. (eds.), *New regionalisms in the global political economy: Theories and cases*, London: Routledge, 2002; U. Engel et al. (eds.), *The New Politics of Regionalism: Perspectives from Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific*, London: Routledge, 2016; M. Farrell, B. Hettne and L. van Langenhove (eds.), *Global politics of regionalism: Theory and practice*, London: Pluto Press, 2005; L. Fawcett and A. Hurrell (eds.), *Regionalism in world politics: Regional organization and international order*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; B. Hettne, A. Inotai and O. Sunkel (eds.), *Globalism and the new regionalism*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999; P. Riggirozzi and D. Tussie (eds.), *The rise of post-hegemonic regionalism: The case of Latin America*, New York: Springer, 2012; Shaw et al., The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms; F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *Theories of new regionalism: A Palgrave reader*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

27 B. Hettne, "Globalization and the new regionalism: The second great transformation", in: B. Hettne, A. Inotai and O. Sunkel (eds.), *Globalism and the new regionalism*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, pp. 1–24; B. Hettne, "Beyond the 'new' regionalism", *New Political Economy* 10 (2005) 4, pp. 543–571; Hurrell, "One world? Many worlds?". Contrary to earlier assumptions in IR, this does not mean that regionalization is running against globalization. Instead, NR theories consider both processes to be mutually reinforcing, assuming a dialectical relationship (Hettne, "Globalization and the new regionalism"; M.H. Marchand, M. Bøås and T.M. Shaw, "The political economy of new regionalisms", *Third World Quarterly* 20 (1999) 5, pp. 897–910).

28 A. Gamble and A. Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and world order*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996; H. Hveem, "The regional project in global governance", in: F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (eds.), *Theories of new regionalism: A Palgrave reader*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 81–98.

29 Marchand et al., "The political economy of new regionalisms"; T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen, "Introduction and overview: The study of new regionalism(s) at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century", in: T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 3–30.

30 J.J. Hentz, "Introduction: New Regionalism and the 'Theory of Security Studies'", in: J.J. Hentz and M. Bøås (eds.), *New and Critical Security and Regionalism: Beyond the Nation State*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 3–16 ; B. Hettne, "Security Regionalism in Theory and Practice";, in: H.G. Brauch (ed.), *Globalization and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualizing Security in the 21st Century*, New York: Springer, 2008, pp. 403–412; F. Söderbaum and R. Tavares, "Problematizing Regional Organizations in African Security", *African Security* 2 (2009) 2-3, pp. 69–81.

31 D.C. Bach, *Regionalism in Africa*, New York: Routledge, 2016; O.C. Iheduru, "New Regionalism, States and Non-State Actors in West Africa", in: J.A. Grant and F. Söderbaum (eds.), *The New Regionalism in Africa*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 47–66 ; O.C. Iheduru, "The 'New' ECOWAS: Implications for the Study of Regional Integration", in: T.M. Shaw, J.A. Grant and S. Cornelissen (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*: Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 213–239; Tieku, "The Evolution of the African Union Commission and Africrats: Drivers of African Regionalisms".

32 H. Gandois, "Security regionalism in West Africa: Conceptions and practices", in: S. Aris and A. Wenger (eds.), *Regional organisations and security: conceptions and practices*, London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 41–58; U.G. Moti, "A review of regional approaches in dealing with security issues", *International Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 2 (2013) 5, pp. 117–130; C.I. Obi, "ECOWAS-AU security relations", in: J.J. Hentz (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of African Security*, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 198–206; F. Söderbaum, "'Whose Security?' Comparing Security Regionalism in West and Southern Africa", in: J.J. Hentz and M. Bøås (eds.), *New and Critical Security and Regionalism: Beyond the Nation State*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 167–182.

33 Two exceptions are Bach who explicitly reflects on the spatial implications of the (five) prototypes of cross-border interaction he discerns; and to a lesser extent Söderbaum, who distinguishes two types of security regionalism: an "informal" one, predominantly driven by non-state actors working through networks; and a "formal" one primarily pursued by states (Bach, "Regionalism in Africa"; Söderbaum, "'Whose Security?'").

34 SFB 1199, *Verräumlichungsprozesse unter Globalisierungsbedingungen", Antrag auf Einrichtung und Förderung des Sonderforschungsbereichs 1199*, Leipzig: Universität Leipzig, 2015. The term spatialization marks (only) the latest development in

spatialization, it is helpful to draw on an approach developed by Jessop, Brenner, and Jones.[35] This approach emphasizes that different sociospatial relations may combine in different ways and play out to varying degrees, for instance, in territorial, place-based, scalar, and network dimensions.[36]

Spatialization is driven by either individual actors or groups of actors that converge around some commonality, for example, an interest or a goal. Their spatializing action and behaviour is informed by earlier experiences and preconceived knowledge (e.g. value, norms, and understandings) of how spaces are organized, named, delimited, and so on. Thus, actors navigate their environment using particular mental maps, positioning themselves vis-à-vis others. In enacting their imaginations, they (re)produce a particular spatial arrangement through unintended "everyday" practices without this being the central aim.[37] At the same time, actors can direct their efforts intentionally towards creating and / or defending a particular (image of) spatial organization, thus pursuing a specific spatial project. When these spatial projects come into contact with those of other actors, they blend into complex amalgams and become part of a sometimes violently negotiated spatial order. A spatial order, thus, is the result of a variety of spatial projects taking on particular positions and relations towards one another.

To illustrate this point, ongoing processes of spatialization in West Africa have recently gained considerable international attention due to increased reports about drug trafficking and "acts of terror". These have put into question the (imagined) system of sovereign states in West Africa. Consequently, national, regional, and international actors have intervened in various ways in order to counter these dynamics. In particular, the AU and ECOWAS have tried to maintain or reconstruct this (imagined) spatial order. In turn such interventions (may) have produced alternative (and partly competing) processes of spatialization.[38]

Mali in 2012

The year 2012 began with a strong reminder of the ongoing dissatisfaction of groups of Tuareg in the north of Mali. On 17 January, armed Tuareg attacked the Malian army's garrison in Menaka, which led to heavy fighting with government forces throughout towns in the north, including Aguelhok, where a massacre of Malian army troops by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was reported.[39] The MNLA, a merger of different groups of Tuareg sought to establish the independent territory of Azawad. In contrast, Ansar Dine ("defenders of the faith"), another armed group of Tuareg, was decidedly against a vio-

a (probably ongoing) process of attempting to understand certain observations regarding states, borders, and space: in the 1990s mainstream narratives about the "end" of the state (K. Ōmae, *The end of the nation state: The rise of regional economies*, New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1996) or the dawn of a "global age" (M. Albrow, *The global age: State and society beyond modernity*, Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997) understood globalization as a unidirectional increase of (mostly economic) trans-border flows with (only) de-territorializing effects. A more careful observation maintained that a description in terms of a simplified trend towards a "borderless" de-territorialized world is not accounting for the simultaneous developments of some borders becoming dismantled while others are being (re-)constructed. This dynamic has been captured in an understanding of processes of de- and re-territorialization as being dialectic (Appadurai, "Sovereignty without Territoriality"; Brenner, "Beyond state-centrism?"; U. Engel and M. Middell, "Bruchzonen der Globalisierung, globale Krisen und Territorialitätsregimes: Kategorien einer Globalgeschichtsschreibung", *Comparativ* 15 (2005) 5–6, pp. 5–38). Although acknowledging the dialectic of de- and re-territorialization has been an important intellectual step to overcome the idea of stable and fixed territories, it continued to limit the analysis to just one spatial dimension, i.e. the territory. Thus, spatialization is the current attempt to overcome these conceptual shortcomings.

35 B. Jessop, N. Brenner and M. Jones, "Theorizing sociospatial relations", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008) 3, pp. 389–401.

36 Ibid.; B. Jessop, "Territory, Politics, Governance and Multispatial Metagovernance", *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4 (2016) 1, pp. 8–32.

37 B. Werlen, "Regionalisations, Everyday", in: R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (eds.), *The International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 286–293.

38 Using the term "transboundary formation", Callaghy, Kassimir, and Latham, describe possible results of such processes of spatialization (R. Kassimir; R. Latham and T.M. Callaghy (eds.), *Intervention and transnationalism in Africa: Global-local networks of power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

39 IRIN, "A timeline of northern conflict", 5 April 2012, www.irinnews.org / report / 95252 / mali-timeline-northern-conflict (accessed 26 Apr 2016).

lation of Mali's territorial integrity and aimed instead at transforming the state according to the laws of their Islamic faith.[40] In addition, smugglers were armed and defended their routes and businesses (mostly against the Malian army). Throughout the year, new armed groups formed with their own aims, at times in opposition to already existing groups.[41] These events present a vivid expression of the violent effects that may result from the pursuit of different spatial projects by different groups of actors.

The intertwined events that led to the coup and independence declaration for Azawad

In its response to the violence in the north, the Malian government under President Amadou Toumani Touré (byname ATT) revealed its personalized and autocratic tendencies; ATT mainly consulted with a close circle of military advisors instead of engaging with civilian groups or in the parliamentary processes.[42] He pursued a predominantly military reaction while the Malian army remained short of decisive technical and personal resources.[43] Unsatisfied with their living and fighting conditions and feeling neglected by the political leadership, young rank-and-file soldiers started protesting at the Kati military camp outside Bamako during a visit by the Malian defence minister, General Sadio Gassama, on 21 March.[44] Before the day's end, protests had spread to several garrisons and army members under the leadership of Captain Amadou Sanogo had entered key government institutions in the capital. One day later, on 22 March, they announced their takeover on national television.[45] This disrupted the preparations for the upcoming elections scheduled for 29 April, in which ATT, after having completed two terms in office, did not seek re-election.[46]

As the political leadership was contested in the capital, effective government control of civil and military state institutions was suspended. The remaining soldiers in the north who were without strategic leadership eventually simply deserted. At the same time, state officials fled the towns of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal, and even parts of the Mopti area.[47] In this environment, the MNLA — in fluid temporal alliances with other armed groups — was able to claim more and more territory. Their strongest ally was Ansar Dine, which had close relations to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MU-

40 Reuters, "Top Mali Islamist rejects northern independence, wants sharia in whole country", 17 June 2012, http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2012/06/17/top-mali-islamist-rejects-northern-independence-wants-sharia-in-whole-country/ (accessed 1 May 2016); M.Y. Welsh, "Mali Tuareg and Islamist rebels agree on Islamist state, *Al Jazeera*, 17 January 2013, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/20131139522812326.html (accessed 1 May 2016).

41 The National Liberation Front of Azawad, as an example among many, was led by a local state official and a defected lieutenant colonel in the area of Timbuktu and opposed both the secessionist plans of the MNLA as well as Ansar Dine's goal to implement an Islamic legal system (Agence France-Press Bamako, "New Mali militia leaves Timbuktu to 'avoid bloodbath'", *Al Arabiya news*, 28 April 2012, https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/04/28/210762.html [accessed 26 Apr 2016]). Pro-government citizens' militias would become important throughout the conflict as well, see Boisvert, "Failing at Violence".

42 M. van Vliet, "Mali (Vol. 8, 2011)", in: A. Mehler, H. Melber and K. van Walraven (eds.), *Africa Yearbook Online*, Brill Online, 2012, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/africa-yearbook-online/mali-vol-8-2011-ayb2011_COM_0013 (accessed 2 May 2016). ATT, himself colonel and former member of the parachute regiment, led a coup d'état against former President Moussa Traoré in March 1991 and acted as head of the transitional committee before handing power over to the first elected president Alpha Oumar Konaré in June 1992. ATT was later elected as a civilian president in 2002 and again in 2007 (P. Fletcher, "Mali's 'Soldier of Democracy' toppled by own army", *Reuters*, 22 March 2012, www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-army-toure-idUSBRE82L0RL20120322 [accessed 1 May 2016]).

43 Théroux-Bénoni, "The long path to MINUSMA", at 173.

44 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 3, pp. 19183–19217.

45 Some observers referred to these events as an "accidental coup", explaining it to be the unintended outcome of spontaneous and unorganized protests (See P.R. Pillar, "The Accidental Coup: How Confused Protesters Seized an African Country", *The Atlantic*, 4 April 2012, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/the-accidental-coup-how-confused-protesters-seized-an-african-country/255442 [accessed 1 May 2016]), others disputed such an interpretation (R. Baroud, "Nothing 'accidental' in Mali: More misery awaits, *Al Arabiya*, 31 July 2012, http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2012/07/31/229472.html [accessed 1 May 2016]). Engelhardt even invoked the possibility of a "drug-coup" (*Drogenputsch*); such a reading would interpret the anger of low-level military members as a reaction to an obstruction of their counter-trafficking efforts by ATT who would have been a profiteer of the illicit trading (M. Engelhardt, *Heiliger Krieg: Heiliger Profit, Afrika als neues Schlachtfeld des internationalen Terrorismus*, Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2014, at 129). Yet others noted that ATT himself had been the leader of the so called "democratic coup" in 1991 that ended the rule of Moussa Traoré (R. Nathan, "Democracy in early Malian postcolonial history: The abuse of discourse", *International Journal* 68 (2013) 3, pp. 466–478).

46 A. Nossiter, "Soldiers Overthrow Mali Government in Setback for Democracy in Africa", *New York Times*, 22 March 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/world/africa/mali-coup-france-calls-for-elections.html?_r=1 (accessed 21 Jun 2016).

47 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 3; M. van Vliet, "Mali (Vol. 9, 2012)", in: A. Mehler, H. Melber and K. van Walraven (eds.), *Africa Yearbook Online*, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/africa-yearbook-online/mali-vol-9-2012-ayb2012_COM_0014 (accessed 2 May 2016).

JAO). On 6 April, the MNLA declared Azawad independent, establishing its provisional authorities in Gao.[48] The MNLA received international attention after issuing this declaration, not least due to the MNLA's active use of communication technology.[49] Yet, its combat strength on the ground was inferior to that of Ansar Dine and MUJAO. Not long after, the MNLA was ousted from Timbuktu by its former ally Ansar Dine, which instituted sharia-based rule in the city. On 11 July, the MNLA lost its hold over Gao, its chosen provisional capital, to MUJAO.[50] In October, it renounced its earlier declaration and until the end of the year lost much of its territory to MUJAO and Ansar Dine.[51]

Both the coup on 22 March and the independence declaration of Azawad on 6 April have a common entangled history. To understand the developments in 2012 it is vital to consider the events and decisions made by the ATT government during the last armed struggle of groups of Tuareg for more autonomy in 2006.[52] This particular episode of violence was diffused quite rapidly, which can be attributed to two dynamics. First, many of the young fighters were absorbed into the ranks of the forces loyal to Muammar al-Gaddafi.[53] Second, ATT engaged early on in negotiations with representatives of groups of Tuareg, which eventually resulted in an agreement to withdraw much of the Malian army and central administration from the northern provinces of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal. Voices from within the military accused the president of deliberately rushing these talks and agreements in order to not disrupt the then upcoming elections in 2007, in which he sought, and eventually was elected for, a second term.[54] A general dissatisfaction with his leadership and distrust in its democratic character had spread not long after ATT's re-election.[55]

While many outside observers saw Mali as a promising young democracy, proud of its innovative "consensus" model, for ordinary Malians the "state's democratic institutions lack[ed] credibility".[56] At times the government was seen as answering to international donors rather than to its own population. Citizens in rural areas, in particular, were concerned with the longterm lack of services provided by the government that had made everyday life more difficult.[57] When violence resurfaced in 2012, the government's focus on a military response put the armed forces under increased pressure. This prompted internal tensions between the so-called "red berets", mainly members of the parachute regiment and presidential guard who were treated favourably by ATT, and the so-called "green berets", ordinary soldiers fighting with few resources in the north.[58] Most of those protesting and engaging in the subsequent coup were associated with the latter

48 Al Jazeera, "Tuaregs claim 'independence' from Mali", 6 April 2012, www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/2012464441 2359539.html (accessed 26 Apr 2016). Proclaimed and mainly seen as a nationalist Tuareg claim there were also attempts to frame the struggle for an independent Azawad on a more racially and ethnically inclusive base. Noteworthy in that regard was the public appearance of Mahamadou Djeri Maïga, "an MNLA ethnic black [Songhai] fighter", who stated that "The MNLA is not a Touareg group; it is a national movement for all the people of Azawad" (V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 4, pp. 19219–19257).

49 See M. de Bruijn, L. Pelckmans and B. Sangare, "Communicating war in Mali, 2012: On-offline networked political agency in times of conflict", *Journal of African Media Studies* 7 (2015) 3, pp. 109–128. In this regard, the National Movement of Azawad should be noted. Forming in October 2010, it joined the MNLA a year later along with other groups. It had less of a martial, but rather an activist and political character. It comprised mainly young well educated Tuareg, with the ability to employ international peoples' rights rhetoric and navigate the channels of information and communication technology (A. Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali", *Think Africa Press*, 6 February 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20150121170721/http://thinkafricapress.com/mali/causes-uprising-northern-mali-tuareg [accessed 26 Apr 2016]).

50 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 7, pp. 19331–19365.

51 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 10, pp. 19439–19473; B. Lecocq and G. Klute, "Tuareg separatism in Mali", *International Journal* 68 (2013) 3, pp. 424–434.

52 The Tuareg are by no means a homogeneous group, but rather identify through a common language. Their socio-cultural and economic practices may vary as well as their relationship towards the central Malian government. For an in-depth analysis of the complex social structure of the Tuareg as well as its manifold impact on the formation of political alliances among different groups of Tuareg in prior armed conflicts with the Malian central authority in the 1960s and 1990s (B. Lecocq, *Disputed Desert: Decolonisation, Competing Nationalisms and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali*, Leiden: Brill (Afrika-Studiecentrum series), 2010).

53 Gaddafi had always been sympathetic towards the Malian Tuareg's claims for more autonomy. He often used his influence to strengthen their negotiational position against the Malian government as well as used their struggle for own tactical concerns – all of which was tied to his personal joy of "playing the myth of the pastoralist nomad" (H. Brody, "Gaddafi and the Tuareg: The 'Lords of the desert', *Open Democracy*, 8 October 2011, www.opendemocracy.net/hugh-brody/gaddafi-and-tuareg-lords-of-desert [accessed 25 Apr 2016]).

54 G. Chauzal and T. van Damme, *The roots of Mali's conflict: Moving beyond the 2012 crisis*, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2015.

55 M. Coulibaly and M. Bratton, "Crisis in Mali: Ambivalent Popular Attitudes on the Way Forward", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2 (2013) 2, pp. 1–10.

56 Nathan, "Democracy in early Malian postcolonial history", at 467.

57 J. Bleck and K. Michelitch, "The 2012 crisis in Mali: Ongoing empirical state failure", *African Affairs* 114 (2015) 457, pp. 598–623.

58 A. Marc, N. Verjee and S. Mogaka, *The Challenge of Stability and Security in West Africa*, Washington: World Bank Publications,

group.[59] Years of mismanagement and nepotism had left the army in a desolate state.[60] As a result, the coup leader Sanogo enjoyed widespread popular support and was perceived as stepping up to a corrupt, incompetent, and elitist government unable to act decisively against the violent armed groups of Tuareg in the north.[61]

Three interrelated developments need to be considered regarding the 2012 escalation of violence in Mali. First, in 2010 the Malian government launched the Special Programme for Peace, Security and Development in northern Mali (PSPSDN) to improve the economic conditions in the northern provinces and to (re)install proper state security and control over the territory. In its function to counter activities considered terrorist acts it was supported by the European Union (EU). While the central government had reduced its presence in the north after agreements with local Tuareg representatives in the 2006 Algiers Accords, it now re-established its reach.[62] Initially the PSPSDN aimed to include local authorities and sparked hopes for an end to the economic marginalization in these areas. This aim had become a promise after multiple violent uprisings of groups of Tuareg. Yet the PSPSDN triggered widespread frustration and disillusionment as it failed to be inclusive and focused mainly on reinstating political and military control from the capital in Bamako.[63]

Second, resourceful non-state armed groups had established themselves in the north of Mali and became powerful actors within the violent conflict throughout 2012. The most prominent among them was the mainly Algerian group, AQIM. One of its central aims was to overthrow the Algerian government and restructure the country in accordance with conservative Islam.[64] Apparently, AQIM had acquired great financial wealth by kidnapping foreign (mostly Western) nationals and collecting ransom money. This financial – and subsequent combat – strength made it a particularly attractive ally for Ansar Dine.[65] Another important group was MUJAO, a 2011-formed splinter group of AQIM. As its central goal, it aimed to spread jihad to a wider region, reaching throughout the Sahel and Maghreb and was believed to endeavour a West African caliphate.[66]

The third factor was the Libyan conflict in 2011. The Tuareg that had fought for Gaddafi's armies returned after the fall of his regime.[67] Many of them had been able to acquire heavy weaponry from the Libyan arms depots that various groups in the region looted as the Libyan forces disintegrated.[68] In October 2011, they

2015, at 128.

59 A. McGregor, "Red Berets, Green Berets: Can Mali's Divided Military Restore Order and Stability?", *Terrorism Monitor* 11 (2013) 4, pp. 7–10.

60 L.-A. Théroux-Bénoni et al., "Mali: Making peace while preparing for war", ECOWAS Peace and Security Report (2012) 1, https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ECOWAS1-ENG.pdf.

61 B. Whitehouse, "The Force of Action: Legitimizing the Coup in Bamako, Mali", *Africa Spectrum* 47 (2012) 2–3, pp. 93–110.

62 R.R. Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel", *African Security* 4 (2011) 4, pp. 242–268.

63 Chauzal and van Damme, *The roots of Mali's conflict*.

64 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 5, pp. 19260–19293. AQIM has its origins in the Algerian Civil War from 1992–2002, that was set off by a political turn towards multi-partyism which gave rise to successful Islamic factions, but was opposed by many in the political and military leadership and eventually took on a violent nature. In protest of stark human rights violations, a group of fighters broke away from the Armed Islamic Group and in 1998 formed the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat – the predecessor of the AQIM. In 2003 the group allied itself with Al-Qaeda and re-named itself to AQIM in 2007 (Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb"). For an alternative interpretation of the origins of AQIM that attributes the formation and most of its activities (considered acts of terror) to the Algerian military secret service (J. Keenan, "The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the 'Second' (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 25 (2007) 1, pp. 31–58).

65 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 5.

66 C.F. Ziemke-Dickens, "The Sahel Crisis as a Harbinger of Future Peacekeeping Challenges", in: A. Powles, N. Partow and N. Nelson (eds.), *United Nations Peacekeeping Challenge: The Importance of the Integrated Approach*, New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 183–202.

67 Ronen, "Libya, the Tuareg and Mali on the eve of the 'Arab Spring' and in its aftermath"; S. Shaw, "Fallout in the Sahel: The geographic spread of conflict from Libya to Mali", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 19 (2013) 2, pp. 199–210.

68 Lecocq et al., "One hippopotamus and eight blind analysts", at 345. There is uncertainty about the exact figure of armed Tuareg returning from Libya with some authors stating that they numbered between 2,000 and 4,000 (S. Stewart, "Mali Besieged by Fighters Fleeing Libya", *Stratfor*, 2 February 2012, www.stratfor.com/weekly/mali-besieged-fighters-fleeing-libya [accessed 26 Apr 2016]), while other reports 1,000 (A. Nossiter, "Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorate an Insurgent Army in Mali", *The New York Times*, 5 February 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/africa/tuaregs-use-qaddafis-arms-for-rebellion-in-mali.html?_r=0 [accessed 26 Apr 2016]) and still others report that the numbers reported were as low as 800 (J. Keenan, "Mali's Tuareg rebellion: What next?", *Al Jazeera*, 20 March 2012, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/20123208133276463.html [accessed 26 Apr 2016]). The UN's report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region estimates that in total 30,000 people have returned from Libya to Mali, mostly young men with little formal education, but does not indicate how many of them might have joined non-state armed groups (UNSC, "Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region (S/2012/42)", New York, 18 January 2012).

merged with already existing groups of Tuareg to form the MNLA with its goal to free "the people of Azawad from the illegal occupation of their territory by Mali".[69] These interrelated developments substantially impacted the political order and security arrangements in the north of Mali eventually leading to violent conflict.

The politics of ECOWAS and the AU towards the multilayered conflict in Mali

In its reaction to these events ECOWAS' politics were directed at re-establishing constitutional order after the coup and at defending the territorial order in Mali. ECOWAS had substantial experience in reacting to coups d'état. By using its power to impose sanctions while maintaining a dialogue, it was able to reach an agreement on 6 April 2012 with the coup leadership on a framework to re-establish civilian rule.[70] Less than a week later, Dioncounda Traoré, who had previously served as Mali's parliamentary speaker, was sworn in as interim president and Cheick Modibo Diarra was appointed interim prime minister shortly thereafter. On 26 April 2012, at an extraordinary summit in Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS decided that if the coup leaders wanted to avoid sanctions, elections had to be held within 12 months and the transition to constitutional order needed to be finalized. During that meeting ECOWAS also agreed to immediately deploy troops from the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) in reaction to the independence declaration of the MNLA and the occupation of major towns in the north of Mali by armed groups.[71] ECOWAS depended on the United Nations (UN) to sanction and support the ECOWAS Mission in Mali (MICEMA). After prolonged hesitation, justified with reference to insufficient details in planning and a lack of logistical resources, the UN Security Council (UNSC) later on in 2012 endorsed a revised proposal for deployment. In addition to these concerns, part of the UN's hesitation was due to its traditional role as peacekeeper that now collided with the proposal to actively engage in peace-enforcement in the north of Mali.[72] Another obstacle in the planning of MICEMA was the refusal of Algeria and Mauritania, the two non-ECOWAS neighbours of Mali, to engage in the conflict militarily.[73] Even though ECOWAS was very capable in mitigating the post-coup situation, it was unfamiliar with the security situation in the Malian north and its actors with their regional connections. In the peace negotiations of previous conflicts with Tuareg and other armed groups in Mali, not ECOWAS but Algeria in coordination with Libya had taken a lead.[74] In July, the ECOWAS Contact Group on Mali called for an inclusive government and a national platform for communication between the different groups in the north and the government in Bamako. ECOWAS relied on the Burkinabé president, Blaise Compaoré, as chief mediator throughout.[75] He had close ties with interim Prime Minister Diarra and experience in negotiations with armed groups regarding

69 IRIN, "Warriors and websites: A new kind of rebellion in Mali?", *IRIN*, 26 March 2012, www.irinnews.org / report / 95170 / analysis-warriors-and-websites-new-kind-rebellion-mali (accessed 26 Apr 2016).

70 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 4, at 19229.

71 Ecowas, "Final Communique. Extraordinary Summit of Ecowas Heads of State and Government", Abidjan, 26 April 2012. Initially the coup leadership rejected the proposal for the deployment of an ECOWAS mission and announced that if such troops were to deploy, they would not cooperate (V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 4). This was a particularly harsh setback for the planning of such a mission, since the Malian army would have been the prime partner on the national level. The transitional government later accepted the force with the aim to provide security for the political leadership in the capital as well as to retake the lost territory in the north.

72 J. Karlsrud, "The UN at war: Examining the consequences of peace-enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali", *Third World Quarterly* 36 (2015) 1, pp. 40–54.

73 Théroux-Bénoni, "The long path to MINUSMA". The course of action of these particular neighbouring countries has to be considered against their long-running and immediate foreign relations with Mali. Algeria, itself having a Tuareg population, has a long history of being either directly involved in Malian Tuareg uprisings (as in the 1960s), a migration destiny for Malian Tuareg, or a major facilitator of negotiations and agreements between the Tuareg and the Malian government (in 1990s and today) (P.J. Imperato and G.H. Imperato, *Historical dictionary of Mali*, Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2008; P.C. Naylor, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). In contrast, Mauritania does not have a Tuareg population, although some key individuals of the MNLA political leadership are based in Nouakchott, auch as the notable female member among the MNLA leadership, Nina Wallet Intalou (I. Mandraud, "Nina Wallet Intalou, la pasionaria indépendantiste des Touareg maliens", *Le Monde*, 18 April 2012, www.lemonde.fr / afrique / article / 2012 / 04 / 18 / la-pasionaria-independantiste-des-touareg-maliens_1687042_3212.html (accessed 1 May 2016); Théroux-Bénoni, "The long path to MINUSMA"). Mauritania's relationship with Mali has instead centered around transnational smuggling, the countries have cooperated in smuggling operations, they have also accused each other's state officials of being involved in it. A Mauritanian-French military operation with the aim of freeing hostages on Malian territory had been executed in 2010 without prior information of Malian authorities, which gravely strained foreign relations between the two neighbors (M. van Vliet, "Mali (Vol. 7, 2010)", in: A. Mehler, H. Melber and K. van Walraven (eds.), *Africa Yearbook Online,* Brill Online, 2011, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com / entries / africa-yearbook-online / mali-vol-7-2010- ayb2010_COM_0014 [accessed 9 May 2016]).

74 ICG, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (III): West Africa*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2016, at 16.

75 ICG, *Mali: Avoiding Escalation*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012, at 22.

the release of hostages.[76] He held talks with the political leaders of Mali as well as with Ansar Dine and was assisted by Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan as well as representatives from Algeria, Mauritania, and Nigeria.[77] While talks were riddled with friction, in general various stakeholders accepted ECOWAS' mediation efforts.

The AU immediately suspended Mali's membership after the coup. In a communiqué from its 315th meeting in Addis Ababa, held on 23 March, the Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) lamented the coup's impact on the democratic development of Mali, requested the swift restoration of constitutional order, and called on all armed groups to stop human rights violations.[78] On 12 June 2012, the AU PSC authorized the ECOWAS Standby Force, mandating it to provide security during the phase of political transition, to reform the security sector, and to restore state authority in the North, which was to be done in cooperation with neighbouring states Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger as well as states in the Sahel.[79] The AU PSC further urged the UN Security Council to endorse the ECOWAS force, however in both the UNSC resolution 2056 enacted on 5 July and resolution 2071 enacted on 12 October, the UN only expressed condemnation for the events in Mali and appreciation for the efforts of ECOWAS and the AU. The UN failed to authorize deployment, instead asking for a refinement of the proposal for an ECOWAS stabilization force.[80] During the 339th AU PSC meeting, held on 24 October, Mali's membership was reinstated. The reinstatement facilitated the implementation of plans for an intervention, even though elections were only to be held in 2013.[81] Throughout the process to deploy a military mission to Mali, the AU and ECOWAS — at times openly — opposed each other in a competition over political leadership of the situation.[82] At the same time, the AU was confronted with a planning deadlock in the communication with the UN. Moreover, in an attempt to dissolve the Algerian resentment towards an ECOWAS military mission in Mali, MICEMA was absorbed into the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), thus transforming it into a continental effort and bridging the subregional divide. This reformulation of the envisioned mission was thought to better facilitate potential UN support for such a force.[83] In November ECOWAS and the AU endorsed a revised concept of operations for an AFISMA deployment comprising of 3,300 troops.[84] The UN finally authorized the deployment of AFISMA on 20 December,[85] but did so without deciding on a financial and logistical support package as the AU had requested and the UN had previously done in the case of the 2009 AU mission in Somalia.[86] The response to the crises in Mali eventually strained the relationship between the UN and the AU severely, particularly during the transition from AFISMA to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in July 2013.[87]

The conduct of the parties has been described as a "slow process of consensus building and delays in addressing the situation" among ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN.[88] The involvement of ECOWAS and the AU in the conflict in Mali was by no means a one-way street. For the AU this experience of actively engaging in the provision of peace and security had far-reaching consequences. In particular, the tedious development of the African-led military mission that was to provide security assistance to the Malian army increased the frustration of many observers and policy-makers due to the absence of a functioning rapid deployment

76 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 4, at 19229; V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 7, at 19242.
77 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 7, at 19242.
78 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / COMM [CCCXV])", 315th Meeting, Addis Ababa, 23 March 2012 .
79 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / COMM [CCCXXIII])", 323rd Meeting, New York, 12 June 2012. The ECOWAS Standby Force is one of five regional brigades (for the North, South, East, Centre and West of Africa) that make up the spatial and regional components of the African Standby Force, a pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture.
80 UNSC, "Resolution 2056", Adopted by the Security Council at its 6798th meeting (S / RES / 2056), New York, 5 July 2012; UNSC, "Resolution 2071", Adopted by the Security Council at its 6846th meeting (S / RES / 2071), New York, 12 October 2012.
81 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / MIN / COMM.2 [CCCXXXIX])", 339th Meeting, Addis Ababa, 24 October 2012.
82 ICG, Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (III), at 16.
83 L.-A. Théroux-Bénoni, "Lessons from the Malian crisis for the international security architecture", *Issafrica*, 15 April 2013, www.issafrica.org / iss-today / lessons-from-the-malian-crisis-for-the-international-security-architecture (accessed 2 May 2016).
84 PSC, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Mali (PSC / AHG / 4. [CCCLIII])", Addis Ababa, 25 January 2013.
85 UNSC, "Resolution 2085", Adopted by the Security Council at its 6898th meeting (S / RES / 2085), New York, 20 December 2012.
86 Williams and Boutellis, "Partnership peacekeeping".
87 Ibid.; P.D. Williams and S.A. Dersso, *Saving Strangers and Neighbors: Advancing UN-AU Cooperation on Peace Operations*, New York: International Peace Institute, 2015.
88 S.A. Dersso, *Annual Review of the Peace and Security Council 2012 / 2013*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 2013, at 64.

mechanism within the properties of the African Peace and Security Architecture. This frustration eventually served as a catalyst for the introduction of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises.[89]

The complications in Mali also showed the difficulties of the envisioned geography for the African Standby Force, which is organized into five regional brigades according to established subregional organizations. The Malian conflict with its transnational reach was situated between the ESF region and that of the North African Regional Capacity (NARC), of which Algeria and Mauritania were a part. These two neighbouring countries were actively engaged in resolving the conflict, while the NARC has not been in a position to deploy. The EU had stated in July 2012 its intention to approve an African military force that was sanctioned by the UN.[90] Accordingly, it envisioned providing training to the Malian army that was supposed to lead such an African-led military offensive against the armed groups in the north. Yet after the French intervention that began on 11 January 2013 under the name Opération Serval, this plan was changed.[91] The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) only first got under way on 18 February 2013 with the mandate to reinstate constitutional and democratic order, to assist "the Malian authorities to exercise fully their sovereignty over the whole of the country", and to combat organized crime and terrorism.[92] In this context, other European states have supported the French and UN efforts through the deployment of military personnel. Among them Germany, who has substantially increased its involvement in Mali in the last years.[93]

Apart from the established ROs, alternative regional alliances were formed by Mali and its neighbouring countries in response to the transnational character of some of the security concerns. For example, the activities of AQIM and MUJAO and the increased taking of (Western) hostages since 2009/10 have dominated the relationship between Mali and Mauritania as well as Algeria. The interdependent security of the three countries (with regard to transnational organized crime, terrorism, and kidnapping) was characterized by mistrust, but also by cooperation as in the case of the establishment of the Comité d'état-major opérationnel conjoint in April 2010 as well as the founding of the Centre de renseignement in September later that year. Both institutions were created to facilitate cooperation and informational exchange regarding terrorism between these governments as well as that of Niger.[94]

To sum up, the events that unfolded in Mali throughout 2012 exemplify the imagining, contesting, and repositioning of different (political) spatial projects. The unilateral declaration of independence of Azawad by the MNLA formed the most visible expression of a spatial project beyond the Malian state, but it is also indicative of the contested sovereignty of the central government. Similar expressions may be found in the attempts of Ansar Dine and AQIM to promote the legal institutionalization of a version of Islamic law as well as in the pursuit of armed groups (without obvious religious or political aims) to defend sources of income, such as trading networks that are beyond the control of the Malian security apparatus. This violent contestation of Malian state sovereignty with its re-spatializing effects was met by the attempts of ECOWAS and the AU to defend their envisioned spatial order. Since most actors were simultaneously entangled in other regional dynamics, the conflict was influenced by extranational forces and at the same time had ramifications beyond a single national territory. Perceived as a transnational security threat with a local government unable to control the various non-state armed groups, ECOWAS and the AU responded to the developments in northern Mali with the aim to preserve the territorial integrity of the country and in reaction to the coup, to defend their principle of sanctioning unconstitutional changes of government. In this the two ROs cooperated with various international actors accompanied by their imaginations and strategies on how to organize space in Mali and the Sahel, all of which became involved through their own interests.

89 AUC, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Operationalisation of the Rapid Deplyoment Capability of the African Standby Force and the Establishment of an African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (RPT/Exp/VI/STCDSS/[i-a])", Addis Ababa, 29–30 April 2013; R. Esmenjaud, "The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis: Conceptual breakthrough or anti-imperialist phantom?", *African Security Review* 23 (2014) 2, pp. 172–177.

90 V. Hoskins (ed.), *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 7.

91 Théroux-Bénoni, "Lessons from the Malian crisis for the international security architecture"; Théroux-Bénoni, "The long path to MINUSMA".

92 European Union External Action, "EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali)", 2015, www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-mali/pdf/factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf (accessed 9 May 2016).

93 For an account on the German involvement in Mali, see M. Hanisch, *On German Foreign and Security Policy. Determinants of German Military Engagement in Africa since 2011*, Berlin: Miles-Verlag, 2015.

94 Naylor, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria*; van Vliet, "Mali (Vol. 7, 2010)".

Guinea-Bissau in 2012

In Guinea-Bissau a coup d'état on 12 April 2012 interrupted the presidential elections after the first, successful though inconclusive, round of voting. A self-proclaimed "military command", composed of a group of generals and senior army officers, arrested interim President Raimundo Pereira, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior (frontrunner in the ongoing elections),[95] as well as the army chief of staff, António Indjai.[96] Several high-level state representatives went into hiding, while others were reported missing.[97] As it slowly was discovered, António Indjai, although arrested himself, appears to be the ringleader behind the coup.[98] On 13 April, the coup leaders announced its terms for a transition ("unity") government. Subsequently, it invited opposition parties for negotiations on the formation of a National Transition Council intended to run the country for a two-year transition period. The "military command" and leaders of 20 opposition parties signed a transition agreement on 18 April.[99]

Some background information on structural and more immediate factors leading to the coup in April 2012

Ever since Guinea-Bissau formally gained independence in 1974 (and in fact already beginning during the struggle for independence), various (internal) divisions and power struggles (running through all levels of the state, its political parties, and its society), shifting alliances, as well as alleged, attempted, or actual coups have been persistent features of the country's politics. In addition, as the result of a process started during the presidency of Luis Cabral, but truly taking hold when João Bernardo Vieira came to power in 1980, the military (or particular competing factions of it) has become a (if not the) central actor in its own right, frequently interfering in political affairs.[100] Consequently, a climate of chronic instability came to dominate politics in Guinea-Bissau and continues to do so. Then and still today, Guinea-Bissau is facing serious problems regarding its economic performance and the provision of basic services, such as health and education, throughout the country. Highly indebted, it ranks among the lowest scoring countries in the Human Development Index (178 of 185 in 2014); volatile and insufficient agricultural production is the root of chronic food insecurity.

These conditions have (had) important implications for issues of (state) sovereignty. First, sovereignty of both the colonial and the post-colonial state in Guinea-Bissau has always been challenged, contested, and shaped by different subnational non-state actors.[101] Second, since colonial times the state has been dependent on financial, material, and technical assistance from outside the country.[102] This dependence even applies to the military, despite its highly creative ability to find alternative sources of income (often consid-

95 Both Pereira and Gomes Júnior are members of Guinea-Bissau's leading party, the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde).

96 AU Assembly, "Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa [Assembly / AU / 6(XIX)]", 19th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, Addis Ababa, 15–16 July 2012.

97 AU Assembly, "Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa (Assembly / AU / 6(XIX))"; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S / 2012 / 280)", New York, 30 April 2012.

98 UNSC, "Record of the 6754th meeting (S / PV.6754)", New York, 19 April 2012.

99 *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 4.

100 B. Embaló, "Civil–military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50 (2012) 2, pp. 253–281; ICG, *Guinea-Bissau: In Need of a State*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2008.

101 Above all, historically various differently organized local communities have played an important role in structuring social and political spaces (T. Djaló, *O mestiço e o poder: Identidades, dominações e resistências na Guiné*, Lisboa: Vega, 2012; J.B. Forrest, *Guinea-Bissau: Power, Conflict, and Renewal in a West African Nation*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992; J.B. Forrest, "Guinea-Bissau", in: P. Chabal and D. Birmingham (eds.), *A history of postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 236–263; J.B. Forrest, *Lineages of State Fragility: Rural Civil Society in Guinea-Bissau*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), producing different spatialities, as well as – presumably – changing spatial orders and expressions of power constellations. Moreover, alliances of resistance against (perceived) common threats, most importantly external intervention in local affairs, are recurrent (Forrest, *Lineages of State Fragility*). Spatially, these have encompassed either several local communities or taken the form of transnational networks (especially during the independence struggle) (Forrest, *Guinea-Bissau*; Forrest, "Guinea-Bissau").

102 R.E. Galli and J. Jones, *Guinea-Bissau: Politics, economics and society*, London: Pinter, 1987.

ered as illicit).[103] In a process that may be described as "extraversion",[104] Guinean elites have developed much closer links to international donors than to the country's own populace.[105] This has given international actors considerable sway over Guinean policies (e.g. international experts assist in the drafting of national action plans, strategies, and laws) and some leverage to influence the military towards accepting reforms (i. e. in the defence and security sectors). In turn, Guinean actors have shown a remarkable ability to gain access to a wide variety of funding and support without providing much more than symbolic actions in return.[106]

Complementing these (external) sources of income are illegally acquired resources, predominantly those related to the smuggling of different goods. With respect to the coup of April 2012, there are two commodities of particular importance: arms (since the anti-colonial struggle) and more recently drugs. There is evidence that both military and political elites are involved in illicit transnational trading, including those operating in the highest level of their respective hierarchies.[107] In this context, "trafficking of arms" and "drugs" has often become a rhetorical resource. Mutual accusations of involvement in these activities are part of tactics aiming at discrediting or delegitimizing political opponents. According to reports by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, there has been a significant increase in drug trafficking since the early 2000s, which appears to have had a destabilizing influence on the state and society in Guinea-Bissau and on West Africa as a region. It entails not only (violent) struggles between Guinean actors over control of these networks, but possibly between international criminal actors (e.g. Columbian drug cartels) setting-up shop in the country and more broadly throughout the region as well.[108] There has been speculation about the involvement of such actors in some of the (attempted) coups within the country.[109]

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103 UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S / 2002 / 662)", New York, 13 June 2002; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S / 2004 / 969)", New York, 15 December 2004; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S / 2007 / 715)", New York, 6 December 2007.

104 J.-F. Bayart, "L'Afrique dans le monde: Une histoire d'extraversion", *Critique internationale* 5 (1999), pp. 97–120; J.-F. Bayart, *L' État en Afrique: La politique du ventre*, Paris: Fayard, 2006.

105 Embaló, "Civil–military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau"; Galli and Jones, *Guinea-Bissau*; Forrest, *Lineages of State Fragility*; M. Shaw, "Drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998–2014: The evolution of an elite protection network", *Journal of Modern African Studies* 53 (2015) 3, pp. 339–364.

106 C. Kohl, "Guinea-Bissau (Vol. 4, 2007)", in: A. Mehler, H. Melber and K. van Walraven (eds.), *Africa Yearbook Online*, Brill Online, 2008, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com / entries / africa-yearbook-online / guinea-bissau-vol-4-2007-ayb2007_COM_0011 (accessed 2 May 2016). In particular, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (and the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau headed by him) has been instrumental in mobilizing resources from UN funds (e.g. Peace Fund), and actively lobbying for support to the acting Guinean government (UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S / 2009 / 301)", New York, 10 June 2009; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2010 / 550)", New York, 25 October 2010; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S / 2012 / 887)", New York, 27 November 2012).

107 Embaló, "Civil–military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau", at 264–265; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S / 2008 / 395)", New York, 17 June 2008; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2010 / 335)", New York, 24 June 2010; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S / 2012 / 887)", New York, 27 November 2012. In April 2010, the US Treasury added Bubo Na Tchuto (former Chief of the Guinean Navy) and Ibraima Papa Camara (Guinea's Air Force Chief) to its drug-kingpin list (US Treasury, "Treasury Designates Two Narcotics Traffickers in Guinea-Bissau Treasury Targets Emerging West African Narcotics Transit Route", Press Release, Washington, 4 August 2010, www.treasury.gov / press-center / press-releases / Pages / tg633.aspx (accessed 4 May 2016)). In April 2013, Na Tchuto was arrested by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in international waters; Indjai was indicted on charges of "narcoterrorism" (US DOJ, "Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Arrests Of Drug Kingpin Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, The Former Head Of The Guinea-Bissau Navy, And Six Others For Narcotics Trafficking Offenses", Press Release, New York, 5 April 2013, www.justice.gov / usao-sdny / pr / manhattan-us-attorney-announces-arrests-drug-kingpin-jose-americo-bubo-na-tchuto-former (accessed 4 May 2016); US DOJ, "Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Charges Against Antonio Indjai, Chief Of The Guinea-Bissau Armed Forces, For Conspiring To Sell Surface-To-Air Missiles To A Foreign Terrorist Organization And Narco-Terrorism Conspiracy", Press Release, New York, 18 April 2013, www.justice.gov / usao-sdny / pr / manhattan-us-attorney-announces-charges-against-antonio-indjai-chief-guinea-bissau (accessed 4 May 2016)).

108 Apparently, they are attracted by the favourable geographic environment (i. e. numerous archipelagos), and low capacities of state institutions to enforce laws and border control (see UNODC, "Cocaine trafficking in West Africa"). Thus, contrary to a narrative that presents drug trafficking and the like as the cause of state "weakness" in Guinea-Bissau, it is precisely this particular environment that attracts such (illicit) activities (see Vigh, "Critical states and cocaine connections").

109 ICG, *Guinea-Bissau*: *Beyond Rule of the Gun*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2009; Shaw, "Drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998–2014".The increased attention, markedly created by the international press, has earned Guinea-Bissau the label "narco-state" (see A.N. Bybee, "Narco State or Failed State? Narcotics and Politics in Guinea-Bissau", PhD thesis, George Mason

Relatedly, a particularly contentious issue in international efforts to stabilize Guinea-Bissau has been the deployment of a foreign technical military mission to assist with a reform of the defence and security sector. Since 2009, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) had tried to prepare the stage for such a mission, which was called for by parts of the government, but rejected outright by other parts and the military leadership.[110] In March 2011, the military eventually accepted the deployment of the Angolan Military Mission in Guinea-Bissau (MISSANG), based on bilateral agreements between the governments of Guinea-Bissau and Angola. Nevertheless, right from the start, the Angolan troops met with skepticism not only from the Guinean military but from parts of civil society as well. MISSANG was perceived as a force to secure Angolan economic interests in Guinea-Bissau (e.g. bauxite, oil, banking) and to back efforts by Prime Minister Gomes to eradicate unwanted elements in the military.[111] In any case, these efforts increased pressure on the military — threatening its position of power and lucrative business — thus contributing to the developments that led to the events of 2012.

Initial reactions to the coup of April 2012 were largely unanimous. Nationally, civil society tried to organize mass protest, but was violently quelled. The coup was condemned in various public statements (e.g. by the PAIGC, representatives of civil society, and five of the presidential candidates that had opposed the results of the first round of the presidential election[112]). Internationally, the instantaneous reaction was unanimous condemnation, calling for the unconditional release of unlawfully detained officials and the immediate return to constitutional order. In that sense, early statements, in particular by the AU, CPLP, ECOWAS, and EU, all called for the completion of the interrupted electoral process, rejecting any illegitimate government established by unconstitutional means.[113] This position was subsequently adopted by the UN Security Council.[114] The World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the EU suspended their aid to Guinea-Bissau (except for some emergency assistance).[115] Guinea-Bissau's membership in the AU and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) was suspended.[116] Subsequently, ECOWAS, the EU, and the UN imposed sanctions targeting individual members of the "military command".[117]

However, this initial consensus was not maintained, most predominantly because ECOWAS changed its position, as described in the following section, and consequently had to face the resistance of the remaining international actors, in particular the CPLP. Although this resistance faded throughout 2012 — partly because the attention had shifted to other issues (e.g. the conflict in Mali) — the West African RO still had to cope with a lack of external cooperation and it failed to obtain international recognition for its transition

University, 2011; P. Chabal and T. Green (eds.), *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-State to 'Narco-State'*, London: Hurst Publishers, 2016; L. Horta, "Guinea-Bissau: Africa's first narcostate", African Studies Centre — University of Pennsylvania, 2007, www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/guinbisauhorta.html (accessed 28 Jan 2016); Loewenstein, "How Not to Fix an African Narco-State"; D. O'Regan and P. Thompson, *Advancing stability and reconciliatin in Guinea-Bissau: Lessons from Africa's first narco state*, Washington DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2013; Vulliamy, "How a tiny West African country became the world's first narco state"). However, there is very little substantial scientific research on the actual amount, significance, and functioning of drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau (see Shaw, "Drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998–2014"). From what is known, the label appears to be fuzzy and misleading. From this emerges the question to what end exactly the label is actually used by different actors (e.g. attract support or justify interventions)?

110 *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 47 (2010) 8, pp. 18495–18529; ICG, *Guinea-Bissau: Building a Real Stability Pact*, Brussels: International Crisis Group 2009; Yabi, *The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict*.

111 ICG, *Beyond Turf Wars: Managing the Post-Coup Transition in Guinea-Bissau*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012; Kohl, *Irrwege und Auswege*.

112 See UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280)", New York, 30 April 2012, at 5.

113 AUC Chairperson, "The African Union Rejects the Ongoing Unconstitutional Manoeuvers in Guinea-Bissau", Press Release, Addis Ababa, 14 April 2012; CPLP, "Resolução sobre a Situação na Guiné-Bissau", VIII Reunião Extraordinária do Conselho de Ministros da CPLP, Lisbon, 14 April 2012; Ecowas Commission, "Ecowas Reaction to Ongoing Coup Attempt in Guinea-Bissau (104/2012)" Press Release, Abuja, 13 April 2012; EU, "Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau (A 171/12)", Brussels, 14 April 2012. The focus is on the main multilateral actors. For example, there have also been various statements issued by responsible institutions of foreign states (e.g. USA, France, China, and Russia; see P.K. Mendy and R.A. Lobban, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau*, Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013, at 179 and 186).

114 UNSC, "Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2012/15)", New York, 21 April 2012.

115 EU, "Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau (A 171/12)", Brussels, 14 April 2012; World Bank and AfDB (African Development Bank), "Joint Statement of the African Development Bank Group and the World Bank Group on the Situation in Guinea-Bissau (2012/405/AFR)", Washington, 18 April 2012.

116 OIF, "La Francophonie suspend la Guinée-Bissau (CP/SG/07/JT/12)", Communiqué de Presse, Paris, 18 April 2012; PSC, "Communiqué (PSC/PR/COMM(CCCXVIII)), 318th Meeting, Addis Ababa, 17 April 2012.

117 See Ecowas, "Ecowas Sanctions Guinea-Bissau After Failed Talks (124/2012)", Press Release, Abuja, 1 May 2012; EU Council, "Council imposes sanctions on coup leaders in Guinea-Bissau (9412/12; Presse 187)", Brussels, 3 May 2012; EU Council, "Council reinforces sanctions against military junta in Guinea-Bissau (10507/12; Presse 228)", Brussels, 31 May 2012; UNSC, "Resolution 2048 (S/Res/2048 (2012))", 6774th Meeting, New York, 18 May 2012.

organs and to have sanctions lifted. Despite the continuous support and active engagement of consecutive heads of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau this situation prevailed until successful elections took place in 2014.[118]

The reactions of the AU and ECOWAS to the crisis in Guinea-Bissau following the coup of April 2012

The AU's engagement in the crisis following the coup in Guinea-Bissau has largely focused on following current events, discussing them in meetings at different levels, and issuing statements or communiqués (i.e. public pronouncements). In April, the AU PSC held two meetings that dealt with the situation in Guinea-Bissau. On these occasions it strongly condemned the coup, demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the detained officials, and completely rejected the transition agreements of 18 April, calling for the completion of the electoral process.[119] When Guinea-Bissau was suspended from participation in all AU activities on 17 April, the AU Commission (AUC) was tasked to propose sanctions.[120] Meanwhile, the AU maintained contact with ECOWAS and the CPLP through their chairs (Côte d'Ivoire and Angola respectively). Over the course of May 2012, the AU's stance towards the transitional organs in Guinea-Bissau somewhat softened, most likely because of the results achieved by ECOWAS (i.e. concessions by the "military command", see below). It endorsed all ECOWAS decisions and welcomed its "dynamism", emphasizing the principle of subsidiarity.[121] While the AU still called for the restoration of constitutional order, any reference to what exactly this meant was avoided.[122] In January 2013, the rhetoric had changed completely. Now, it was the PAIGC that was accused of blocking the return to constitutional order until then.[123]

In May 2012, the AUC chairperson, Jean Ping (former foreign minister of Gabon and the president of the UN General Assembly), appointed his special representative in Guinea-Bissau, Ovidio Pequeno (former foreign affairs minister of Sao Tome and Principe), who would also head the country's AU Liaison Office. In addition, a so-called Multilateral Consultation and Coordination Framework on the Stabilization of Guinea-Bissau was announced with the intention of organizing stakeholder meetings in order to consult with international partners.[124] Despite supporting ECOWAS, the AU kept Guinea-Bissau suspended until after the successful elections in 2014. Since January 2013, AU activities have largely focused on mobilizing international support for the reconstruction of the country.[125]

Turning to ECOWAS, a couple of days into the conflict emanating from the events of 12 April 2012, the West African RO started to shift its position towards the "military command" in exchange for some concessions.[126] These included the release of Prime Minister Gomes and interim President Pereira (27 April) as

118 Until January 2013, this was Joseph Mutaboba, former Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the UN, thereafter José Ramos-Horta, former president of Timor-Leste.

119 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / COMM(CCCXVIII))"; PSC, "Communiqé (PSC / MIN / COMM / 1. (CCCXIX))", 319th Meeting, Addis Ababa, 24 April 2012.

120 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / COMM(CCCXVIII))"; PSC, "Communiqé (PSC / MIN / COMM / 1. (CCCXIX))".

121 AUC Chairperson, "The AU Reaffirms its Support to the Efforts Aimed at Ensuring an Early Return to Constitutional Order", Press Release, Addis Ababa, 11 May 2012.

122 AUC Chairperson, "The AU Appoints a New Special Representative in Guinea-Bissau, Head of the AU Liaison Office in that Country", Press Release, Addis Ababa, 8 May 2012. Apparently, the AU tried to walk a line between the ECOWAS approach and the position of the EU. In its report to the AU Assembly, the AU PSC reiterates its support to ECOWAS without referring to the interrupted presidential elections. However, attached to the annex is a press statement from the consultative meeting between the EU Political and Security Committee and the AU PSC insisting on the reinstatement of the legitimate government and the resumption of the interrupted electoral process (AU Assembly, "Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa (Assembly / AU / 6(XIX))").

123 PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / Comm(CCCLI)). 351st Meeting. Addis Ababa, 16 January", 2013.

124 AU Assembly, "Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa (Assembly / AU / 6(XIX))"; PSC, "Communiqé (PSC / MIN / COMM / 1. (CCCXIX))".

125 AUC Chairperson, "The AU Makes an Urgent Call for the Mobilization of the Necessary Support for the Successful Conduct of the Electoral Process in Guinea-Bissau", Press Release, Addis Ababa, 18 September 2013; PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / PR / Comm(CCCLI))"; PSC, "Communiqué (PSC / AHG / COMM / 1.(CCCXCVII))", 397th Meeting, New York, 23 September 2013.

126 On 26 April, ECOWAS issued an ultimatum to the "military command", threatening sanctions if it did not meet its demands within 72 hours. When the "military command" failed to comply, ECOWAS imposed targeted sanctions against the coup leaders, as well as economic, financial, and diplomatic sanctions on 30 April (Ecowas, "Ecowas Sanctions Guinea-Bissau After Failed Talks (124 / 2012)"). In the end, however, it may have been the intransigent position of more powerful international actors (e.g. UN and EU), which also prepared or had already imposed sanctions, that nudged the "military command" towards meeting ECOWAS half way.

well as agreeing to hold fresh elections within twelve months (i.e. the ECOWAS version of completing the electoral process) and to hold negotiations about the modalities of a "consensual transition".[127] The latter of which resulted in the ECOWAS-brokered Transition Pact signed on 16 May by 17 Guinean political parties (including the Party for Social Renovations, but not the PAIGC).[128] Most importantly however, ECOWAS managed to push the "military command" to accept the deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) in Guinea-Bissau (becoming ECOMIB), to replace MISSANG. The first troops totaling 629 (677 including non-military personnel) arrived on 17 May 2012; full deployment was completed on 29 November[129] and the withdrawal of MISSANG was completed on 9 June.[130] Since then ECOWAS has been working towards negotiating and building a consensus around transition agreements and respective transition organs. What is more, left alone by the traditional Western donors, ECOWAS had to pitch in not only to fund ECOMIB but also to provide financial and technical support to pay the salaries of public servants, to continue reforms, and to work towards the restoration of constitutional order (i.e. elections as soon as possible).[131]

In addition to deploying troops, ECOWAS' main ways of engaging in the conflict included numerous reports, meetings, discussions, and press releases as well as constant consultation and negotiations with local and international stakeholders. It dispatched several missions aiming at the resolution of the crisis and two West African heads of state, Alpha Condé (Guinea-Conakry) and Yahya Jammeh (Gambia), tried to mediate on behalf of ECOWAS.[132] The president of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo (former prime minister of Burkina Faso), appointed a special representative in Guinea-Bissau, Ansumané Ceesay (former ambassador of Gambia), to head the local Liaison Office. Moreover, the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, first initiated in 1998, was reactivated but soon blocked by the competition between ECOWAS and the CPLP. Therefore, to overcome the deadlock, a regional contact group headed by Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan was established.[133]

To summarize, in 2012 there was de-facto no one in Guinea-Bissau with a convincing claim to sovereignty. The self-proclaimed "military command" and the transition government were internally contested (both within the political elite and civil society) and had absolutely no international recognition until ECOWAS decided to change its position, opposing most other international actors, and assert its support in the long run.[134] Thus, ECOWAS took on a certain degree of effective sovereignty over Guinea-Bissauan political mat-

127 Ecowas, "Final Communique. Extraordinary Summit of Ecowas Heads of State and Government", at 7.

128 see UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2012 / 554). New York, 17 July", 2012.

129 Ibid.; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2013 / 26)", New York, 16 January 2013.

130 UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2012 / 554)". It is important to note that ECOWAS deployed without any international mandate (except its own), although the decision was endorsed by the AU and noted by the UN afterwards (see above). A mission agreement with the Guinean government was not signed before November 2012 (Ecowas, "Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding of the Defence and Security Sector in Guinea-Bissau (305 / 2012)", Press Release, Bissau, 7 November 2012). Some observers have suggested that ECOWAS tried to preempt a similar mission to be deployed by the CPLP, and may have also used this possibility to convince the "military command" to accept the ECOWAS mission (see IRIN, "Division and Stasis in Guinea-Bissau", 18 May 2012, www.irinnews.org / report / 95483 / analysis-division-and-stasis-guinea-bissau (accessed 2 May 2016)).

131 *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 49 (2012) 11, pp. 19475–19509; Ecowas Commission, "Integration and Political Stability in West Africa", Annual Report, Abuja, December 2012; C. Kohl, "Guinea-Bissau (Vol. 9, 2012)", in: A. Mehler, H. Melber and K. van Walraven (eds.), *Africa Yearbook Online*, 2013, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com / entries / africa-yearbook-online / guinea-bissau-vol-9-2012-ayb2012_COM_0012 (accessed 2 May 2016); UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S / 2012 / 704)", New York, 12 September 2012.

132 Ecowas, "Final Communiqué. Extraordinary Summit of Ecowas Heads of State and Government", Abidjan, 26 April 2012; Ecowas, "Ecowas Losing Patience Over Perennial Crisis in Guinea-Bissau, Says Jammeh (123 / 2012)", Press Release, Banjul, 30 April 2012.

133 The regional contact group comprised Nigeria (chair), Benin, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Conakry, Senegal, and Togo. The International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau brought together a wide variety of actors, from countries such as Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Spain, France, the Gambia, Ghana, the Republic of Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Portugal, and Senegal as well as from the UN, the AU, the CPLP; ECOWAS, West African Economic and Monetary Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

134 It might even be argued that ECOWAS' intervention in the 2012 crisis not only facilitated the transitional process, but in fact "established" and sustained the transitional organs. Such an interpretation would also be supported by a certain tension in the language of ECOWAS pronouncements. The final communiqué of the 42nd ECOWAS Summit, held in February 2013 in Yamoussoukro, states that ECOWAS' authority "extends" the transition period, while in the actual decision, publicly less visible; the extension is only "supported" (see Ecowas, "Final Communiqué", 42nd Ordinary Session of the Ecowas Authority of Heads of State and Government. Yamoussoukro, 27–28 February 2013; Ecowas, "Decision A / Dec.3 / 02 / 13 Supporting the Extension of the Tenure of the Transitional Organs in Guinea-Bissau", 2013).

ters, acting against the country's constitution and against its own principle of "zero tolerance" for unconstitutional changes of government. This is of particular importance since elites in Guinea-Bissau (both military and political) depend heavily on outside resources.[135] Hence, when ECOWAS stepped in the "military command", after some hesitation, accepted its approach as the only game in town, allowing ECOWAS troops into the country and making headway in the resolution of the conflict. This role was eventually acknowledged by most of the other international actors, albeit very slowly. ECOWAS was especially appreciated by the AU,[136] which remained "actively seized" of the situation despite the suspension of Guinea-Bissau, and accepted first by the UN, and later by both the EU and the CPLP.[137]

All things considered, there are (at least) three interesting aspects to observe: First, apparently, there are "good" and "bad" coups.[138] Since the end of the civil war in 1999, not one of the unconstitutional transitions has met with such tenacious opposition by the international community. Despite initial condemnation, the common modus operandi had been to continue financial and technical assistance and to work with the transitional authorities (e.g. after the coup against Yalá in 2003 and against Vieira in 2009). Second, ECOWAS' decision to give its support not to the incumbent government, but to the insurgents, thereby opposing powerful Western actors, may be interpreted as an effort to gain an international profile. Nevertheless, it went along with the RO asserting responsibility, influence, and control.[139] Third, the pullout of most Western donors has resulted in more active engagement of other donors, most prominently ECOWAS and Angola as well as of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the West African Development Bank. Moreover, it may have created an enabling setting, where ECOWAS could pose as the "good cop" vis-à-vis Western actors.[140] The more recent re-engagement of the latter may be linked to the rise of Islamic extremism (i.e. terrorism) in the region (notably in Mali) and the need for regional partners to fight it.[141] Thus, developments outside Guinea-Bissau, in the region in general and in Mali in particular, appear to have indirectly influenced the intervention(s) in the country. This demonstrates the complex way in which regional dynamics intertwine.

Towards a spatial analysis of AU and ECOWAS politics in Mali and Guinea-Bissau

At this point, far more detailed research is needed to give precise answers to the empirical questions in this paper and to make substantiated claims about processes of spatialization, both in our case and concerning

135 Without ECOWAS' support they might have considered reinstating the democratically elected government (as has been the case in the aborted coup in April 2010 (Embaló, "Civil–military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau").

136 AUC Chairperson, "The AU Reaffirms its Support to the Efforts Aimed at Ensuring an Early Return to Constitutional Order".

137 In his reports to the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General had repeatedly called on international actors to develop a unified strategy (UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S / 2012 / 554)"; UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S / 2012 / 704)"). However, it appears that developments on the ground convinced the EU and the CPLP to soften their stance towards ECOWAS. Between November 2012 and January 2013, the PAIGC gave up resisting and joined the (ECOWAS-brokered) Transition Pact (of 16 May). In December 2012, a (first) joint assessment mission visited Guinea-Bissau, comprising representatives of ECOWAS, the CPLP, the AU, the UN, and the EU (see AU, "Report of the Joint ECOWAS / AU / CPLP / EU / UN assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau", Addis Ababa, 23 March 2013, www.peaceau.org / en / article / report-of-the-joint-ecowas-au-cplp-eu-un-assessment-mission-to-guinea-bissau (accessed 2 May 2016)).

138 F.N. Ikome, *Good coups and bad coups: The limits of the African Union's injunction on unconstitutional changes of power in Africa*, Pretoria: Institute for Global Dialogue 2007; K. Sturman, *Unconstitutional Changes of Government: The Democrat's Dilemma in Africa*, Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2011.

139 A parallel can be seen to the situation in 1998 / 9, when the incumbent lost the support of the international community, and his ousting was eventually accepted, as was the ensuing transitional government. However, the roles in this play were reversed. While it was the CPLP that opposed the common position of the international community, it was ECOWAS who gave up its support for Vieira late in the process and only reluctantly.

140 ICG, *Au-delà des compromis: Les perspectives de réforme en Guinée-Bissau*, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012; ICG, *Beyond Turf Wars*.

141 Ibid.; *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 50 (2013) 4, pp. 19655–19689.

West Africa more generally. Nevertheless, three tentative sets of answers corresponding to the guiding questions are: (i) the AU and ECOWAS as well as other international actors involved in conflicts in Mali and Guinea-Bissau defend a particular (imagined) spatial order, one which is based on a traditional notion of sovereignty that is exercised by fully territorialized nation states; (ii) at the same time, the interplay of different actors and their strategies produces a dynamic that can only be understood if a more differentiated spatial analysis that goes beyond territory and physical geography (e.g. by including notions of networked or virtual regions) is applied; (iii) moreover, part of these dynamics are alternative processes of spatialization running parallel to the processes of the AU and ECOWAS or, upon occasion, competing with these processes. Conflict intervention as performed by the AU and ECOWAS legally builds on several (sets of) treaties and protocols.[142] In these treaties and protocols, the principles of "traditional" sovereignty are established (i.e. territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs), thereby accepting and defending what is seen as the "Westphalian" system in Africa. Among the central objectives of ECOWAS and the AU is the protection of the territorial integrity of its member states, a principle that was already enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the AU. Thus, ECOWAS and the AU are confronted with what they perceive as spatial projects that undermine or compete with the established spatial order, an order based on fundamental paradigms (i.e. an order of states, imagined to be in full control of their respective territories) that try to uphold this particular order. Cases in point are the independence declaration of the secular state of Azawad, the attempt by MUJAO to establish a West African Islamic caliphate, as well as the transnational networks run by international drug cartels through Guinea-Bissau among other countries. These cases manifest different spatial projects, pursued violently, to which ECOWAS and the AU have reacted to unanimously by emphasizing the return to "constitutional order" based on their policies of "zero tolerance" for unconstitutional changes of government.[143]

Now, in this setting, there are two problems with these policies of ECOWAS and the AU. On the one hand, "traditional" sovereignty has never been exercised in the territories that are associated with today's Mali and Guinea-Bissau (as is the case with many other territories). In both cases there are similar sovereignty regimes and forms of state spatialization (i.e. a state based in the capital with limited outward radiation and military bases throughout the country with limited capacities and one that occasionally exercises coercive power, whose infrastructural power is largely based on international assistance with close ties between the state and international aid agencies, all while having loose ties with its own population).[144] On the other hand, as described in the empirical portion of this paper, the two organizations' interpretations of "zero tolerance" have varied greatly from situation to situation. In Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS effectively legitimized the insurgents, helping them to establish a transitional government; the AU endorsed these decisions. In Mali, ECOWAS negotiated with the leaders of the military coup to establish the further course of action taken towards a civilian transitional government that eventually placed leaders of the coup in prime positions. Thus, there is significant inconsistency regarding the traditional notion of sovereignty (at the heart of the imagined spatial order) that is contradicted both by the empirical (and historical) situation on the ground as well as by the interventions initiated by different actors.

In the "Westphalian" system, a national government is the pivotal legitimate connector between the "inside" (i.e. the domestic) and the "outside" (i.e. the foreign) of a state. Therefore, the "sovereign" government of a state is important for legal reasons, for example, to enter into an international organization as a member state or to have an entry point for external intervention. Thus, military intervention by the AU and ECOWAS in one of their member states (in most cases) is dependent on a formal request from or the approval of the government of the state to act. Strikingly, in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, the importance attributed to having some government (legitimate or not) to communicate / interact with seems to have surpassed the importance of insisting on the (other) principles of the ROs, and in fact contradicts them. The primary focus on formal state

142 AU, "Constitutive Act of the African Union", Lomé, 11 July 2000; Ecowas Commission, "Revised Ecowas Treaty", Abuja, 24 July 1993.

143 U. Engel, "The African Union and mediation in cases of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, 2008–2011", in: U. Engel (ed.), *New Mediation Practices in African Conflicts*, Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verl., 2012, pp. 55–82; J. Leininger, "Against All Odds: Strong Democratic Norms in the African Union", in: T.A. Börzel and V. van Hüllen (eds.), *Governance Transfer by Regional Organizations: Patching Together a Global Script*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 51–67: Sturman, *Unconstitutional Changes of Government*; A. Witt, "Ordering by default: The politics and power of post-coup interventions in Africa", Unpublished PhD thesis, Universität Leipzig, 2016.

144 J. Agnew, "Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics", *Annals of American Geographers* 95 (2005) 2, pp. 437–461; J. Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty*, Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2009.

institutions is further evidenced by the two ROs' choices of response to the crises. On the one hand efforts were made to mediate between disputing parties with mediators selected among other West African heads of state, rather than opting for non-state (moral) authorities (e.g. religious leaders). On the other hand, police and military deployments, above all, were tasked with protecting state representatives and their institutions and (re-)establishing the member state's control over its territory.

Second, beyond this legal way of linking "inside" and "outside", the traditional notion of sovereignty has also worked as a connector on a second level. Rather than separating different spheres, "traditional" sovereignty as a shared imagination has linked a broad range of actors from different geographical areas, producing a common space in and around the ROs and NRs of the AU and ECOWAS. Hence, a particular concern with ideas related to territory has produced a dynamic that can no longer be explained only in territorial terms.

As demonstrated in the empirical parts of this paper, there is a wide array of actors involved in the conflicts in Mali and Guinea-Bissau. The reasons for that are not obvious in all cases. Consider the following two examples: How does one make sense of the strong Angolan presence in Guinea-Bissau, at one point even involving the deployment of a military force? Why is Mali becoming one of the most important sites for the deployment of German military personnel? Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide any satisfactory answer to these questions, it nevertheless is clear that a more differentiated spatial analysis — one that not only includes but also goes beyond territory and physical geography — is needed to understand and explain the complex set of actors, interests, and dynamics that are at play in West Africa. Consequently, only if concepts such as "proximity / distance" or "mobility" are understood as instances of social interaction — characterized by different practices, discourses, and power relations — that produce space by emphasizing certain links at certain times, can one make sense of Angola in projecting its influence and power in West Africa, as well as Germany defending its national security in Mali.

Third, additional (parallel) processes of spatialization are observable within and cutting across the ECOWAS and AU regions and initiatives. Several aspects deserve attention. Most importantly, neighbouring states have directly or indirectly been involved in conflict management and affected decisions taken by ECOWAS and the AU. Feeling more threatened by adverse effects on their own stability, neighbouring states have been particularly eager to take action or to at least influence events thereby recreating the subsidiary UN-AU and AU-ECOWAS logics at the subregional level. Mali, Mauritania, and Algeria had been particularly concerned about the activities of AQIM and MUJAO that reached across the Malian borders and into their own territoritories. Similarly, the Malian Tuareg rebellion affected its neighbours (Burkina Faso, Niger, Algeria, and Libya) with a Tuareg population of their own. The most prominent example regarding Guinea-Bissau is the Casamance issue, which interlinked concerns for security and stability in neighbouring countries (i.e. Senegal and Gambia). Relations with Guinea-Conakry maintain a similar dynamic (e.g. cross-border rear bases of insurgents). Thus, mediators and members of contact groups primarily came from neighbouring countries. This dynamic may be further explained by the transnational character of some of the causes of instability, especially drug trafficking and terrorism, facing neighbours with similar problems. Consequently, there have been different initiatives at different subregional levels.[145] While being more complementary than competitive with the approach(es) of ECOWAS and the AU, these intiatives have nevertheless created parallel processes of spatialization. More competitive have been the processes of spatialization related to divides emerging along the lines of former colonial languages.

Language divides in Guinea-Bissau have played a particularly important role. As a Lusophone enclave in francophone West Africa, ever since its independence Guinea-Bissau has been torn between establishing

145 Examples include the Dakar Initiative (on drug trafficking and organized crime), encompassing Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, and Cabo Verde (M.L. Diatta, "Initiative de Dakar pour la lutte contre la drogue: Le projet bénéficie de 7 milliards sur trois ans", *Afrique Développement Local*, n.d., www.sendeveloppementlocal.com / INITIATIVE-DE-DAKAR-POUR-LA-LUTTE-CONTRE-LA-DROGUE-Le-projet-beneficie-de-7-milliards-sur-trois-ans_a3107.html (accessed 2 May 2016)); and the Nouakchott process (on security cooperation / terrorism) that brings together countries that associate themselves with the Sahelo-Saharan region: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Conakry, Libya, Mali, Mauretania, Senegal, Niger, and Nigeria (AUC, "Nouakchott Declaration", 1st Summit of the Countries Participating in the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, Nouakchott, 18 December 2014). The West African Coast Initiative (on drug trafficking / organized crime) has been set up by several UN agencies (Office for West Africa, Office on Drugs and Crime, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations Department) in collaboration with INTERPOL and ECOWAS. As "pilot countries" it comprises Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire (see United Nations Office for West Africa (Unowa), "West Africa Coast Initiative", 2016, http://unowa.unmissions.org / Default.aspx?tabid=841, updated on 02 May 2016).

closer ties to its francophone neighbour (and thus to France) and maintaining a close relationship with Portugal and its remaining former colonies (bi- and multilaterally).[146] The changing preferences by subsequent Guinean governments exemplify nicely how actors may choose different spatial projects at different times according to their respective goals and the circumstances at hand.[147] At this point in this study, the role (if any) played by an Anglophone-Francophone divide within ECOWAS and observed in other (earlier) conflicts is not clear.[148]

Conclusion and Outlook

Starting with the recent crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, this paper deals with (part of) what can be described as the contemporary violent re-ordering and re-spatialization of West Africa. According to the public's (and, to a lesser degree, the academic) perception and official rhetoric, networks of illicit trade (especially drugs) and terrorism are at the core of the destabilization of West African states. Due to the transnational nature of the threats, the instability of West Africa is widely believed to have negative effects not only on the region but also for the international community at large.

By applying a spatial analysis, this paper highlights something that is not often explicitly stated, yet forms the basis of many (academic) arguments. It argues that an explicit spatial perspective facilitates the visibility and comprehension of how perceptions and imaginations of space influence social (inter)action as well as how they contribute to the production of space.

Focusing on the AU and ECOWAS, two ROs that have been at the forefront in dealing with security concerns in West Africa, this paper shows how notions of sovereignty and the state have guided interventions by these actors as well as those of others aiming to uphold an imagined spatial order of sovereign nation states. This imagined order has (at least) two spatializing effects: on the one hand, the imagination is to some extent shared by different actors in Africa and beyond. Thus, it has contributed to the emergence of a common space of intervention produced by a complex set of interlinkages, practices (both complementary and competitive), and discourses. On the other hand, the actions / interventions based on this shared imagination have triggered several new processes of spatialization, which in turn have impacted back on original spatial perceptions and imaginations.

In order to further substantialize these observations, however, further research will have to be done to identify, describe, and explain in greater detail the exact ways in which particular spatial perceptions and imaginations have influenced the actions taken by the AU, ECOWAS, and other international actors in the conflicts in Mali and Guinea-Bissau; what the resulting space of intervention looks like; as well as who the concrete actors and what the circumstances are that drive alternative processes of spatialization and, by implication, changes to spatial perceptions and imaginations. Research in this direction, centreing on space as a fundamental category, is long overdue and will open new perspectives on, as well as to ask new questions, about complex conflict constellations in West Africa. Moreover, it will help clarify the role of ROs and NRs in dealing with issues of peace and security.

146 Already during colonial times, French and Portuguese interests competed in today's Guinea-Bissau (e.g. see R. A. Lobban and P. M. K. Mendy, *Historical dictionary of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau*, Lanham, Md. Scarecrow Press 1997).

147 Note, that Guinea-Bissau is a member of both the CPLP and the OIF. Moreover, since 1997, Guinea-Bissau is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and part of the West African Communauté Financière Africaine, or CFA, franczone. Interestingly, the different projects that Guinean (state and non-state) actors have engaged in represent different modes of spatiality, e.g. ECOWAS and the AU with a strong territorial dimension (forming a physical-geographical region), as opposed to e.g. the Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), or the CPLP, with predominant network dimensions (forming "virtual regions", S. Boisier, "Regionalization processes: Past crisis and current options", *CEPAL Review* 52 (1994), pp. 177–188).

148 A. Adebajo, *Building peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2002; Adebajo, "Introduction".

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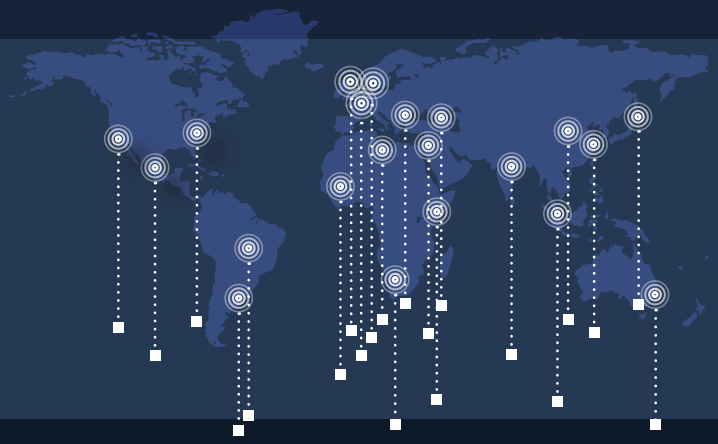

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